13.

AN

ORATION,

DELIVERED NOVEMBER 3d, *A. L.* 5797.

BY THE REQUEST OF

FELLOWSHIP LODGE,

IN BRIDGEWATER,

AT THE

CONSECRATION OF THE LODGE

AND

INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS;

IN THE PRESENCE OF THE

GRAND LODGE

OF

FREE AND ACCEPTED MASONS

IN THE

Commonwealth of Maſſachuſetts,

AND THE

GRAND LODGE

OF THE

STATE OF RHODE-ISLAND.

BY HECTOR ORR.

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1797.

At a meeting of FELLOWSHIP LODGE of FREE and ACCEPTED MASONS, in Bridgewater, November 3d, A. L. 5797.

VOTED,

That our Brothers *Simeon Dunbar, S. D. Daniel Howard*, and *Josiah Otis*, be a Committee to exprefs the thanks of the Lodge to the Right Worfhipful HECTOR ORR for his elegant and fublime Oration delivered this day, and requeft a copy of the fame for the prefs.

True copy from the Records.

NAHUM MITCHELL, Sec'y.

Bridgewater, Nov. 3d. 5797.

TO THE COMMITTEE OF THE LODGE.

BRETHREN,

To gratify the wifhes of the Lodge you reprefent has always been my ambition, and I cannot but acknowledge their civility in the prefent inftance, and fhall comply with their requeft.

I am, with every fentiment of efteem,

your friend and brother,

HECTOR ORR.

Bridgewater, November 9th. 5797.

AN

ORATION.

WORSHIPFUL OFFICERS, *and*
BRETHREN OF THE CRAFT,

CONVENED this day in the solemn temple erected to the Supreme Architect of the universe, in conformity to antient custom of installation, let us here renew our vows, and enter into his courts with praise. As it is the place where HIS honor dwells, so let it be the place of our delight; and by the sacred shrine of religion, let us erect the altar of Masonry, that Christianity may never be lost in the mason, and a mason never lost for the want of Christianity.

The history of Free Masonry forms a most interesting subject for discussion, as it displays the wisdom of the Creator, the force of genius, and the progress and decline of the arts and sciences. It bears no impressions of the horrors and calamities of war; where lawful resistance is made the sport of arbitrary domination. Its pages are not stained with cruel and rancorous persecutions; where the honest believer

believer muſt abjure his faith, or experience the tortures of the inquiſition. It is not, like other antient hiſtories, defaced with the rage and violence of party ſpirit,—with unnatural and inordinate paſſions,—with atheiſtic infidelity, nor the wanton ſmiles of libertiniſm. But it is the herald of univerſal peace and tranquillity ; and as it emanated from the beſt affections of the human heart, ſo, like an angel of love, it brings tidings of GOOD WILL TO MEN. Its object is the attainment of perfection, and to make man the *viſible image* of the INVISIBLE ARCHITECT.

In treading the backward path through ages long elapſed, curioſity ſtands tiptoe at every ſtep to deſcry thoſe unexplored myſteries, which have baffled the reſearches of the moſt inquiſitive mind. If it pauſes but a moment to view the ſurrounding piles of ruin, it muſt lament the ravages of time, which has left but imperfect veſtiges of the beautiful originals. The few indelible traces that have ſurvived the general wreck are ſo many monuments of human ingenuity.

The garden of Paradiſe was undoubtedly favorable to the ſtudy of nature ; but neceſſity only, which was precluded ſo ſerene a clime, could turn the mind to important diſcoveries, and beneficial ſpeculations. And the firſt ſpecimen of invention, we find upon record, that originated

originated there, was the ſewing a few fig leaves together for an apron.

So antient is the foundation of this myſterious ſcience, that it may be diſtinctly traced from the commencement of the world; when light, order and proportion emerged from chaotic night, and the heterogeneous particles of matter that compoſe a univerſe. This claim to antiquity is undiſputed; and collateral with its antiquity is the honorableneſs of the inſtitution. The records of its infancy, when it was purely *operative*, have been cenſured for the admiſſion of too much fiction and myſtery; but, as it quadrates with the manners of the age, it needs no apology. The fondneſs of the antients for allegory and metaphor gave to their writings the appearance of fable and romance;—but their folly is the ſchool of wiſdom.

Before we can obtain admittance into this ſacred retreat, over which preſides WISDOM, TRUTH, and VIRTUE, we muſt be diveſted of every thing, that tends to give offence—by diſcarding from our boſoms every turbulent paſſion—baniſhing pride and raſhneſs, fear and prejudice, hatred and ſlander, private piques and contentions—by reſigning at the door our cares, and leaving behind us even the duſt of our ſhoes; that nothing more impure or corrupt than human nature might paſs the threſhold of the Lodge.—And the firſt *light* we be-

hold is that, which defcended from Heaven to guide men in the path of truth.

The government of a Lodge is as great a myftery, as mafonry itfelf. The hope of reward, and the fear of punifhment, which are the foundation of all obedience in civil fociety, have no influence here. The hammer of the mafter effects more than the moft fpecious promifes, or the commination of the moft rigorous punifhment. Neither feniority nor birth, literary merit nor the moft dignified titles, either civil, military, or ecclefiaftical, recommend a mafon to an office among the craft. The officers are neither chofen by the Lodge, nor hired, taken by lot nor fucceffion; but the whole bufinefs is fo managed as to unite all in the grand defign of being happy, and of communicating reciprocal happinefs.

The moral character of Mafonry is founded upon the irrefragable truths of geometry. The analogy is confpicuous to the attentive inquirer: and the ingenious and experienced craftfman, whofe tools are fo many mementos of his moral obligations and duties, developes the whole fyftem of morality. Pride, which difdains the fhackles of reftraint, never allures him from the *level* of his fellow creatures, nor the fafcinating charms of vice tempt him to deviate from the *plumb line* of rectitude and truth. In his intercourfe with the world, he

is to act upon the *ſquare*, and to keep within *compaſs*. He protracts the *circle* of union, without diminiſhing his benevolence; and, working by *rule*, he *ſmooths* the rugged path of life, and *paves* the *entrance* to the TEMPLE not made with hands.

It is not the deſign of the preſent performance to beſtow extravagant encomiums upon the inſtitution of maſonry. The candid and the wiſe of every nation have been encouragers of the craft, through every grade in life, from the monarch on the throne to the honeſt and induſtrious peaſant that turns the glebe. A *Warren* and a *Franklin*, who are ſtill alive in the memories of their fellow-citizens, and once ſtood high in their eſteem and confidence, preſided over their reſpective Lodges. But the name of WASHINGTON, who ſacrificed the ſweets of Vernon's ſhade to the calls of his country, and braved the ſtorm of war with a manly firmneſs that ſat the world at defiance, gives more ſubſtantial importance to the Craft, than all that can be ſaid or written in its praiſe.

The illiberal aſperſions, which have been beſtowed, in all ages, upon the inſtitution, have proceeded from ignorance, and a bigotted ſyſtem founded by prejudice and an over heated imagination. We publiſh to the world our CONSTITUTION, *hiſtory*, *charges*, *addreſſes*, *laws*, and *regulations*, which are ſo many illuſtrations

of

of our profeſſion. But ſuch has been the force of ſuperſtition and ſcepticiſm that the number is few, who have reſolutely dared to cultivate and practiſe our *principles*, compared to thoſe who have had a curioſity to diſcover our *ſecrets.* Many would waſte away fruitleſs hours to obtain clandeſtinely, what might be known in half that time, if they would read. Others ſhut their eyes for fear of conviction, and would rather ſuffer the imputation of being ignorant, than not cenſure. But we are ſhielded from the ſneers of criticiſm by the honeſty of our intentions, and the approbation of our own conſciences. Thoſe who have the friendly ſympathy *ſecretly* to approve, we have the magnanimity *publicly* to commend. We dread not the ſcrutiny of the candid, nor are we aſhamed to appeal to the good ſenſe of the world for the goodneſs of the principles we profeſs. If we err, it proceeds more from a defect in the head, than from a vicious heart. We boaſt of no ſuperiority in piety or knowledge to thoſe who have not received maſonic light, but we profeſs to know what they do not. This knowledge is a tree bringing forth much fruit, *and the day we eat thereof our eyes are opened ;—knowing good from evil.* The prohibition is dictated by prudence and diſcretion.—To the good and the great of all nations, languages and religion it is *free*, and they will always be *accepted.*

The good opinion of the world will be ever gratefully received ; but we ſhall not ſeek to obtain it by ſelf debaſement, or a voluntary ſacrifice of our opinions. Being FREE, we ſhall never become the ſubmiſſive minions of any haughty deſpot, or irreſolutely abandon the indefeaſible rights of our country.—As we do not infringe upon the ſalutary laws of ſociety, by creating a ſeparate intereſt, we pity that degraded piece of ſpite, which has the effrontery to condemn.—As we touch not the ſacredneſs of any one's character, we neither injure nor deſignedly give offence.—And by making a bulwark of union, we retire to the Lodge, where we bury all national, political and eccleſiaſtical diſtinctions, and riſing ſuperior to private prepoſſeſſions and local prejudices, we blend our affections in the mutual endearments of BROTHERHOOD and CHARITY.

Our own country is to bear witneſs to our patriotiſm ; and our ready and cheerful acquieſcence in the laws of the land will confound our adverſaries, and convince the world of our deteſtation of war, conſpiracies and rebellions. The traitor and the bold aſſaſſin will not be ſhielded from the hand of juſtice by ſeeking a refuge in the peaceful aſylum for the virtuous and good.

Worſhipful

Worſhipful OFFICERS, *and*
BRETHREN *of* FELLOWSHIP LODGE,

Let us give the world ſuch convincing proofs of the beneficial effects of our inſtitution, by our economy,—our indefatigable aſſiduity to our ſeveral occupations in life,—the conſtancy, fidelity, the ardor and warmth of our friendſhips, and the affability of our deportment when without the walls of this favored retreat, as to ſilence the tongue of calumny. Cultivate extenſive *philanthropy*, diſintereſted and comprehenſive *benevolence* and univerſal *virtue*; thoſe important branches of moral and ſocial goodneſs, and the diſtinguiſhing ornaments of the Craft.

Having ability, without prejudice to yourſelves or private concerns, to give food and raiment to the hungry and naked; forget not amid the diffuſion of your gifts the diſtreſſed widow and hapleſs orphan of a deceaſed brother. Let their ſighs always find audience; and when they have unboſomed their neceſſities, let them not ſue in vain. Commiſerate the unfortunate ſtranger, whoſe hard fate has abandoned him to deſpair.—Send ſpeedy relief to the neceſſitous, remembering that though your benevolence is more immediately to be directed towards the fraternity, yet it is never to be abſtracted on account of theſe engagements from the great family of mankind.—Wipe the tear

of

of ſorrow from the diſconſolate eye, and bind up the wounds, and pour comfort into the heart of him, whom the hand of God has ſo bruiſed. Theſe are among the good works, which your religion and your profeſſion enjoin.

However laviſh you may be of the favors of fortune, be ſparing of the *honors* of Maſonry. Degrade not the inſtitution through avarice or a vain deſire to enlarge the circle of your friendſhip; for *merit* only, not numbers, can give reſpectability. By a reſolute and undeviating perſeverance in the practice of this belief, we ſhall be enabled to tranſmit it to our ſucceſſors as an object worthy of their attention.

Finally, BRETHREN, *be ye all of one mind, live in peace, and may the* GOD *of love and peace delight to dwell with and to bleſs you.*